# U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Emerging Leaders Program

Leadership succession accomplished through the identification, tracking, and continued development of emerging high potential leaders

DRAFT Program Guidance pending completion of pilot



# U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Emerging Leaders Program

- 1. PURPOSE: The purpose of the Emerging Leaders Program is to ensure a sustainable and ready leadership pipeline at senior and executive levels of leadership consistent with the Service's leadership succession strategy. To achieve this outcome, this plan outlines a process involving the graduates of the Service's senior competitively selected leadership development program: the Advanced Leadership Development Program (ALDP). ALDP graduates have received advanced development and additional leadership experiences. The Emerging Leaders Program takes that experience to the next step to ensure continued assessment and development of their leadership potential. Within this process, Service leaders will identify emerging high potential future leaders, track their current location and status, assess developmental readiness for increased responsibility, and make recommendations for their further development in order to achieve Service-wide leadership succession needs. It is <u>not</u> intended to circumvent Merit System principles or responsibilities and does not provide for or infer pre-selection for or non-competitive promotion into any position in the Service.
- **2. BACKGROUND:** As the Service continues its focus on our future, we must begin immediately to address our future leadership needs. The Director has directed the strengthening of the Service's existing leadership succession and development activities. Increasing the Service's efforts to prepare high potential employees to meet Service succession needs will better position the FWS to address upcoming leadership vacancies into the future. The potential attrition ranges exceed 50% of total positions at all senior and executive grade levels creating the need for the Service to strategically assess the developmental readiness of emerging leaders within the Service to assume positions of greater scope and responsibility.

Additional succession planning efforts are underway to further support the Director's goal of a holistic Service-wide leadership succession strategy. These efforts have included the identification of the critical leadership competencies required at each level of leadership and the development of a leadership competency development model to guide developmental activities across the Service. New open enrollment leadership and supervisory development programs have been added to the National Conservation Training Center's (NCTC) curriculum to support the leadership development of all employees in the Service. Further, in FY 2007 a mandatory supervisory element of "Developing Others" was placed in all supervisor performance plans. This action was taken to emphasize the importance of and build accountability for leadership succession as an essential activity of all managers. The outcome of these efforts will support supervisors in coaching and developing all employees as they rise into increasingly senior leadership positions. Finally, the Service's Human Resources office is conducting detailed analysis to better understand the long term impacts of attrition by using the most current personnel data, evaluating attrition trends, and developing more rigorous projection tools.

Creating strong linkages among the above leadership succession planning and development efforts are crucial to an effective leadership succession outcome. We must

fully understand our human resource future, strengthen Service competency-based leadership development actions, and increase supervisory accountability for succession planning. Engaging in a consistent Service-wide approach to identify, track, and develop our leadership potential is vital to the long term strength of the Service. Providing for effective leadership into the future guarantees our ability to deliver on our conservation mission for the American people. The Emerging Leaders Program is one piece of a comprehensive strategy to enhance the leadership future of our Service.

**3. PROGRAM GOAL STATEMENT:** The overarching goal of the Emerging Leaders Program is to address the future leadership succession needs of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service by identifying, tracking, assessing and providing continued development opportunities and feedback to previously identified emerging Service leaders for the benefit of the Service, its employees and its mission.

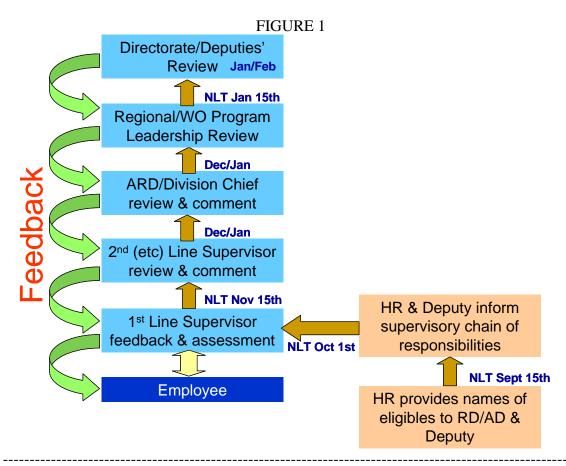
The Emerging Leaders Program will focus on the continued development and utilization of those previously identified by competitive selection for the Advanced Leadership Development Program as having high potential for increased responsibility in leadership given that they continue to exemplify that potential. The Emerging Leaders Program is NOT intended to circumvent Merit System principles nor imply that leadership development is only intended for a select number of rising leaders in the Service. On the contrary, it is in the best interest of the Service for ALL employees to continue their development as leaders of the future and receive fair consideration for any opportunity or position in the Service.

- **4. ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE:** In order to participate in the Service-level program the employee must have been competitively selected for and graduated from the Advanced Leadership Development Program (ALDP), are currently in the grade of GS-13 or above and agree to participate in this program. In addition to the above criteria, the following criteria also apply:
  - Permanent Full-Time Equivalent Status.
  - Annual Performance Review of Fully Successful or higher
  - Not subject to a Performance Improvement Plan.
  - Have an approved Individual Development Plan (IDP) in place

If at anytime during the year of participation a participating employee fails to maintain eligibility on the first three criteria above, eligibility will be suspended by written notification issued by the employee's servicing Human Resources Office through the employee's supervisor. Eligibility will be reinstated by Human Resources upon satisfactory resolution of the cause or causes of ineligibility. Human Resources will notify the employee in writing of reinstatement. The fourth criterion is the responsibility of the supervisor. Per Service manual chapter 231 FW 2, it is each supervisor's responsibility to have an updated IDP in place for all employees annually.

**5. EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM PROCESS MODEL:** The role of supervisors and their chain of command within the Emerging Leaders Program is critical. It is within the direct exchange between supervisors and their direct reports that the most

meaningful observations of leadership readiness, developmental needs, career planning, coaching, and feedback take place. Additionally, the supervisor is the appropriate individual to provide input up the supervisory chain about the employee's overall assessment and developmental requirements. Therefore, the Process Model depicted in Figure 1 reflects this role of each supervisor's involvement starting at the first line supervisor and progressing up the chain of command through program or regional leadership teams to the Directorate.



Note: The dates in the figure above and in paragraph 6 below reflect the schedule for the program for all future years. For FY 08-09, a pilot study will be conducted starting in late May/early June and finishing NLT mid September 2008. See the timeline at Appendix 2 for the adjusted dates for the pilot program

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# 6. ANNUAL EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM PROCESS:

NLT September 15th annually, the Branch of Workforce Planning in the Washington office will provide regional Human Resources offices will provide a list of eligible ALDP graduates in each region to the Regional or Program Director and Deputy Director and Regional Human Resources Officer (HRO). NLT October 1<sup>st</sup> annually, the Deputy Regional Director (DRD) or Deputy Assistant Director (DAD), in conjunction with their servicing Human Resources office, will inform the supervisory chain of each ALDP graduate identified under this process within their program or region of their

responsibilities under this guidance and provide the 1<sup>st</sup> line supervisor with a copy of the USFWS Leadership Development Assessment Report (LDAR; see Appendix 3).

An ALDP graduates' annual participation in this program is voluntary. If the employee elects to <u>not</u> participate in this process, his/her first line supervisor will inform their Chain of Command and their servicing regional Human Resource Office NLT November 15<sup>th</sup> in that year. Each ALDP graduate will be given the opportunity to participate each year. A graduate's decision to participate or not participate in any given year will <u>not</u> affect their eligibility for the program in any subsequent years. If the ALDP graduate elects to participate, the employee will complete the Employee Identification and Employee Certification portions on the front page of the LDAR and return it to their supervisor. The ALDP graduate will also work with their supervisor to ensure that an IDP for the coming year is completed and ready to be forwarded with the completed LDAR.

All supervisors with ALDP graduate direct reports participating in this process will complete and forward a packet that includes a copy of their employee's: 1). USFWS Leadership Development Assessment Report (LDAR) addressing program participant's leadership potential, developmental experiences completed in the past 12 months, assessment of outstanding developmental needs, and a brief narrative that describes the participant's overall readiness for leadership progression (e.g., sections 1 through 3 of the report) and 2). Individual Development Plan (IDP) for the coming fiscal year. The completed report (sections 1 through 3) and IDP will be provided to the direct report's second tier supervisor.

Second tier supervisors and above (if any) will review the LDAR and IDP and provide additional comments and feedback about the employee in section 4 of the report (Appendix 3). The last supervisor in the chain of command will forward the completed and endorsed packet to their Assistant Regional Director (or functional equivalent) no later than January 1st. In the Washington Office (WO), the Program Division Chiefs perform the same function as the Assistant Regional Directors. The ARDs and WO Division Chiefs will evaluate the complete packets and provide written supplemental comment and feedback on the assessment and planned developmental activities to be delivered to the employee via the supervisory chain. Additional pages may be attached to the back of the LDAR is necessary.

NLT January 15<sup>th</sup>, Regional Directors, Assistant Directors, the Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the Chief of Law Enforcement or their Deputies will chair a meeting with their ARDs (Division Chiefs in the WO) to discuss and share information on their rising leaders' potential for leadership at levels of increased responsibility as well as their developmental needs and potential opportunities to meet those needs. These may include, but are not limited to, training and experiential opportunities such as shadow assignments, job swaps, work assignments or projects and developmental assignments. (Note: Use of developmental assignments should be timed so as to not adversely impact the quality and quantity of developmental assignments available to the current ALDP cohort). Regional and Program leaders should use the input of the chain of command as

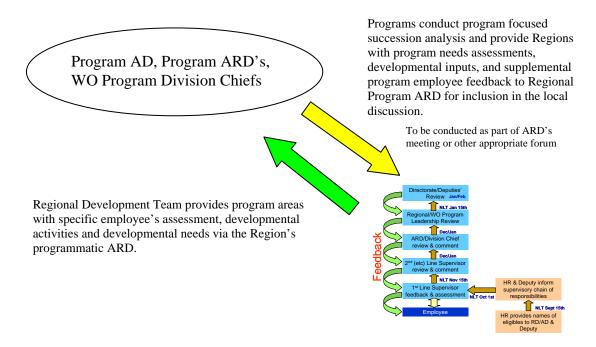
the basis for these discussions as well as provide any additional input based on their knowledge and experience. Developmental needs and opportunities should be shared including needs or opportunities to gain Regional and/or Washington office experience or field experience. Cross-programmatic experience should be considered as long as the individual meets minimum educational, certification or licensure requirements (Note: subject matter experts should be consulted if the requirements are unclear). Responsibilities for funding of travel or other training and development costs should be determined with the input of the employees' chain of command and/or gaining organization (if, for example, the employee will be offered a detail to an organization outside his chain of command, program, region, etc). As the leadership succession and development needs of the Service are intended to be discussed at the winter Directorate meeting, the Regional and Assistant Directors and Chiefs of the NWRS and LE may elect to chair these meetings. (Note: The regional HRO (or their designated representative) should be invited to the Regional or Program leadership meeting in an advisory capacity to provide their expertise and ensure appropriate compliance with Merit System principles and human resources policy.)

The Regional and WO Program leadership teams evaluate and discuss the submitted information for each employee and provide written feedback about the assessment offering supplemental developmental feedback to be provided to the employee via the supervisory chain. This process will be completed by the mid-January timeframe allowing for the discussions to be incorporated into the winter Directorate meeting. Subsequent to the leadership team meeting, all feedback and comments provided by the leadership team and/or supervisory chain will be forwarded back down the chain to the employee and their supervisor. The employee and their supervisor will meet to facilitate meaningful dialog and action during the remainder of the performance plan year as well as incorporate the feedback, comments and any developmental opportunities into the employee's development plan. Any additional developmental opportunities identified and/or completed during the year should be added to the employee's IDP and considered during the developmental portion of the annual evaluation close out discussion in September/October. This will allow sufficient time for preparation of the employee's upcoming Individual Development Plan and will be retained by the supervisor along with the Annual Performance Plan and Individual Development Plan for review during the vear.

**6. PROGRAMMATIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND INPUT PROCESS:** In addition to the process noted above, Service program leadership should conduct program specific discussions and analysis that reflects the leadership needs projected on a national level. Figure 2 identifies the role that Program Assistant Directors, Chief, Law Enforcement, and Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System and their respective leadership teams contribute in the Service succession strategy. While not a required part of this process, this role should be accomplished by the Program leadership teams, preferably in the Spring/Summer timeframe.

#### FIGURE 2

# FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PROGRAMMATIC SUCCESSION NEEDS ASSESSMENT and FEEDBACK PROCESS



Program leadership teams will look across their programs at attrition, program specific leadership needs, developmental needs and opportunities, and provides important leadership developmental feedback for employees seeking increasing leadership challenges within the program area. It is here where ARD's, Regional Chiefs, and SAC's can bring to the attention of the Program the names of employees from outside their program who have expressed a desire to broaden their individual career experience by crossing over and serving in a new or different program area. These individuals may be identified during the Regional leadership team discussions that take place in the December/January timeframe as previously discussed. Program leadership teams may also look for opportunities to broaden currently assigned program employees' crossprogrammatic, field, regional office or Washington office experience through the use of developmental assignments.

A key contribution of the Program leadership teams is to identify the types of developmental opportunities it projects for the upcoming year and engage in deliberative discussions to match these needs against the developmental needs of participating employees identified through the local assessment process taking place in the Regions. (Note: As noted above, ALDP detail needs in the spring and early summer timeframe should be taken into account during these discussions). This input is transmitted back to the Regional teams by the Program ARD in the summer timeframe in order to inform Regional feedback and opportunities developed for the coming year. This input may also

be incorporated into additional Directorate leadership development and succession planning discussions that may occur during the summer Directorate meeting.

#### 7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS:

# a. THE NATIONAL CONSERVATION TRAINING CENTER (NCTC):

NCTC's Division of Training, Branch of Conservation Leadership and Employee Development is the lead office for the Emerging Leaders Program and will provide planning and policy direction and leadership in support of the program. NCTC will work closely with Service leaders to provide training and feedback on the Emerging Leaders Program. NCTC will also make available its leadership development expertise in support of this program and the leaders and staff charged with implementing it. In order to maintain the currency of Emerging Leaders reports provided by the Branch of Workforce Planning in BPHR, NCTC's Branch of Conservation Leadership & Employee Development will forward the names of all graduates of Stepping Up to Leadership (SUTL) and ALDP NLT one week after graduation to the Branch of Workforce Planning.

b. HUMAN CAPITAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICES: Human Capital and Human Resources offices at the Washington Office and Regional level play a critical role in the administration of this program. The Branch of Workforce Planning in the Division of Workforce Management in the Office of the Assistant Director for Budget, Planning and Human Resources (BPHR) will maintain the ability to produce reports on all ALDP graduates still serving the FWS. The reports will be generated from FPPS data. As noted above, each year NLT September 15<sup>th</sup>, the Branch will transmit a current report of all ALDP graduates currently residing in a given region to the Deputy Regional Director and the Regional Human Resources Officer. This report will include as a minimum the following fields:

- Name
- Region
- Duty Title
- Job Series
- Current Grade
- Org Code
- Org Description
- Graduation Date

For the Washington Office, the Branch of Workforce Planning will provide the same report to the Region 9 Human Resources Officer and all Deputy Assistant Directors. This report will include all ALDP graduates currently assigned to the Washington Office.

After receiving the region-level reports, Human Resource officers will confirm each ALDP graduate's continued eligibility for the program per the criteria listed above with the exception of the IDP requirement (see paragraph 4). Human Resources

Officers will identify each ALDP graduate's current chain of command and forward the Leadership Development Assessment Report (Appendix 3) to each of these identified first line supervisors to initiate the process. Deputy Directors, working with their respective Human Resource Officers, will inform the eligible ALDP graduates and their chains of command of their responsibilities under this program. As noted in Appendix 1, first line supervisors will forward the completed Leadership Development Assessment Report up the chain of command until it reaches the Deputy Regional Director or Deputy Assistant Director as applicable. ALDP graduate participation in this program is voluntary. If an eligible ALDP graduate declines to participate, the first line supervisor will immediately inform their chain of command and servicing Human Resources Office. No adverse action should be taken or implied due to non-participation.

**8. CONCLUSION:** The process outlined in this model is intended to bring consistency leadership development and succession planning efforts on a national level while preserving the ability of the Regions and Programs to implement the process in a manner that addresses each unique circumstance. The most important elements of this process are that it is implemented in a fair and equitable manner, that both local and national discourse is achieved regarding the future leadership needs facing the Service, and that our previously identified high potential leaders aspiring to take on increased leadership responsibility receive the assessment and feedback they need to make informed decisions about their leadership development. By engaging in and accomplishing this challenging process, the Service positions itself to meet tomorrow's mission demands by shaping our leadership future.

**Appendix 1: Annual Timelines for the Emerging Leaders Program** 

Timeframe	Event	Responsibility
NLT Sept 15th	BPHR, Division of Workforce Management	HQ BPHR,
	provides names of all eligible GS-15s and	Division of
	all eligible ALDP graduates in their region	Workforce
	(for regions 1 through 8) or programs (for	Management,
	region 9) to Regional and Assistant	Branch of
	Directors, their Deputies and regional	Workforce
	Human Resource Officers.	Planning
NLT Oct 1st	Supervisory chain notified of eligible	Regional HR
	employees, reminded of their reporting	and Deputy
	responsibilities under this program and	(DRD or DAD)
	provided with a copy of the USFWS	
	Leadership Development Assessment	
	Report (LDAR) (See Appendix 3).	
NLT Nov 15th	Supervisors forward completed LDAR and	Supervisors
	employee's Individual Development Plan	
	through their supervisory chain to their	
	Assistant Regional Director (ARD) or	
	Division Chief (for Washington Office).	
Nov 15 <sup>th</sup> –Jan	Supervisory chain provides comment and	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tier
1st	feedback	Supervisors and
.1		above
NLT Jan 15 <sup>th</sup>	Regional and Assistant Directors and/or	ARDs, Division
	Deputy Directors chair meeting to discuss	Chiefs (WO),
	and share information on rising leaders	DRDs, DADs,
	continued potential, developmental needs	RDs and ADs
	and opportunities.	
Late Jan	Directorate discusses leadership succession	Directorate
	and development needs and opportunities at	
	Directorate meeting.	
Late Jan – Feb	Feedback provided down the supervisory	Supervisory
	chain to the employee. Supervisor meets	chain, employee
	with employee to share all feedback and	
G : 75 1	make any adjustments to development plan.	100 000
Spring/Early Summer	Program-level leadership succession and	ARDs, Division
Summer	development discussions	Chiefs, Deputy
		Assistant
		Directors

Note: Regions and Programs may add to or supplement these requirements as needed.

# Appendix 2: Timeline for Pilot Emerging Leaders Program

# This timeline is for the pilot program to be run during summer 2008 only.

Timeframe	Event	Responsibility
NLT May 30th	BPHR, Division of Workforce Management	HQ BPHC,
	provides names of all eligible GS-15s and	Division of
	all eligible ALDP graduates in their region	Workforce
	(for regions 1 through 8) or programs (for	Management,
	region 9) to Regional and Assistant	Branch of
	Directors, their Deputies and regional	Workforce
	Human Resource Officers.	Planning
NLT June 15th	Supervisory chain notified of eligible	Regional HR
	employees, reminded of their reporting	and Deputy
	responsibilities under this program and	(DRD or DAD)
	provided with a copy of the USFWS	
	Leadership Development Assessment	
	Report (LDAR) (See Appendix 3).	
NLT July 15th	Supervisors forward completed LDAR and	Supervisors
	employee's Individual Development Plan	
	through their supervisory chain to their	
	Assistant Regional Director (ARD) or	
	Division Chief (for Washington Office).	
July 15 <sup>th</sup> –Aug	Supervisory chain provides comment and	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tier
15th	feedback	Supervisors and
		above
NLT Sept 30th	Regional and Assistant Directors and/or	ARDs, Division
	Deputy Directors chair meeting to discuss	Chiefs (WO),
	and share information on rising leaders	DRDs DADs,
	continued potential, developmental needs	RDs and ADs
	and opportunities.	
Fall Meeting	Deputies Group discusses leadership	Deputies Group
	succession and development needs and	
	opportunities at Deputy meeting	
Fall Meeting	Directorate discusses leadership succession	Directorate
	and development needs and opportunities at	
	Directorate meeting.	
Nov-Dec	Feedback provided down the supervisory	Supervisory
	chain to the employee. Supervisor meets	chain, employee
	with employee to share all feedback and	
	make any adjustments to development plan.	
Winter/Spring	Program-level leadership succession and	ARDs, Division
	development discussions	Chiefs, Deputy
		Assistant
		Directors

Note: Regions and Programs may add to or supplement these requirements as needed.

Appendix 3: Leadership Development Assessment Report

# **USFWS Leadership Development Assessment Report - ALDP**

Purpose: The purpose of this form is to identify and assess the current developmental needs of the graduates of the Advanced Leadership Development Program (ALDP). The Service has made a significant investment in the competitively selected graduates of these programs. In order to gain the maximum benefit from that investment, development can and should continue beyond the formal completion of the program. This form will assist in identifying those needs in order to maximize the benefit to the Service as well as provide information essential improving our development programs.

<b>Employee Information:</b>		
Name:	Grade:	
Telephone: E-mail:		
Duty Title:	Job Series:	
Duty Station:		
Address:		
Employee Certification: I agree to participate in program. I understand that my current and future and continuing developmental needs may be asses leaders in the FWS. I further understand that this advantage or pre-selection for any positions in the program due to completion of a competitively sele development program. I understand this program without penalty.  Employee Signature:	leadership potential, sed and discussed by process in no way inf future and that I hav ected, national-level I is voluntary and I ma	developmental activities my supervisor and senior fers any competitive e qualified for this TWS leadership my elect non-participation
Prepared by:		
Supervisor Name:	Date: _	
Telephone: E-mail:	:	
Reviewed by:		
Name:	Telephone:	Date:
Name:	_ Telephone:	Date:
Name:	Telephone:	Date:

# Section 1: Assessment of Priority Executive Leadership Competencies

**Instructions:** Assess your employee's current level of development on the following priority Executive leadership competencies on a scale of 1 = Minimal to 5 = Expert. Circle one rating number per competency. Provide comments as necessary to explain your assessment. See the USFWS Leadership Competency Development Model for additional information. (http://training.fws.gov/branchsites/LED/competencymodel/index.html)

**1. Vision:** Takes a long-term view and acts as a catalyst for organizational change; builds a shared vision with others. Influences others to translate vision into action.

Minimal				Expert
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

**2. Strategic Thinking:** Formulates effective strategies consistent with the business and competitive strategy of the organization in a global economy. Examines policy issues and strategic planning with a long-term perspective. Determines objectives and sets priorities; anticipates potential threats or opportunities.

Minimal				Expert
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

			DRAFT			
<b>3. Political Savvy:</b> Id organization. Approach political reality; recogn	thes each pr nizes the im	oblem situ pact of alte	ation with	a clear per	ception of o	organizational and
	N	Iinimal				Expert
	1	l	2	3	4	5
Comments:						
<b>4. Decisiveness:</b> Ex	ercises good	d judgment	by makin	g sound and	l well-info	rmed decisions;
perceives the impact a						
when data are limited	or solutions	produce u	npleasant c	consequenc	es; is proac	ctive and
achievement oriented.	Minimal				Evno	nt
	Millillai				Expe	ıı
	1	2	3	4	5	
Comments:						
Comments:						
Comments:						
Comments:						
Comments:						
Comments:						
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Comments:						
5. Influencing/Negot cooperation from other						
5. Influencing/Negot						es "win-win"
5. Influencing/Negot cooperation from other	rs to obtain				ls; facilitat	es "win-win"
5. Influencing/Negot cooperation from other situations.	rs to obtain  Minimal	informatio	n and acco	mplish goa	ls; facilitat <b>Expe</b>	es "win-win"
5. Influencing/Negot cooperation from other	rs to obtain  Minimal	informatio	n and acco	mplish goa	ls; facilitat <b>Expe</b>	es "win-win"

<b>6. Accountability:</b> Assures that effective controls are both developed and maintained to ensure
the integrity of the organization. Holds self and others accountable for rules and responsibilities.
Can be relied upon to ensure that projects within areas of specific responsibility are completed in
a timely manner and within budget. Monitors and evaluates plans. Focuses on results and
measuring attainment of outcomes.

Minimal				Expert
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

**7. Developing Others:** Develops the ability of others to perform and contribute to the organization by providing ongoing feedback and by providing opportunities to learn through formal and informal methods.

Minima	Expert			
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

# **Section 2: Leadership Development Activities**

Instructions: In part A., list leadership development activities completed by the employee in the last 12 months. These activities can include, but are not limited to, training, developmental assignments, details, job swaps, shadow assignments, etc. In part B., identify the leadership knowledge, skills or abilities in which the employee would most benefit from continued development. In addition to completing this section, attach a copy of the employee's Individual Development Plan for the coming year.

A. Leadership Development Activities in the last 12 months:

**B.** Areas of Continued Development and Emphasis:

# Section 3: Employee Potential and Readiness for Leadership Progression.

Instructions: Write a brief narrative discussing the employee's potential for service at higher levels of leadership and current readiness for positions of higher grade and/or responsibility. Please limit your response to no more than this page.

**Narrative:** 

# **Section 4: Reviewer Comments and Recommendations.**

	ory chain may provide additional comments on the and potential as well as recommendations on
Reviewer Name:	Date:
Comments:	
Reviewer Name:	Date:
Comments:	
Reviewer Name:	Date:
Comments:	